

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 00964 241550Z

44

ACTION AF-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0964

Z.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJECT: FNLA STALLING; MPLA WANTS ELECTIONS; BRITISH CITIZEN

ARRESTED; NEWSPAPER BOMB

1. THE FNLA TACTIC AT THIS MOMENT SEEMS TO BE TO STALL UNTIL AN EXPECTED RELIEF FORCE CAN ENTER THE CITY. FNLA DRAGS OUT NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMISSION MEETINGS, EVENTUALLY AGREES, OR SEEMS TO AGREE TO PROPOSALS AND THEN RAISES NEW OBJECTIONS. THE MPLA IS QUITE CONCERNED OVER THE PROSPECT OF AN FNLA OFFENSIVE AND SOME OBSERVERS DETECT IN ITS CURRENT ATTITUDE A REASONABLENESS HITHERTO LACKING. I IMAGINE THAT MPLA, LIKE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, WANTS THE FNLA OUT OF THE CITY BEFORE FIGHTING STARTS IN NORTH. SHOOTING KEEPS BREAKING OUT AND I SUSPECT THE FNLA PROVOKES FIREFIGHTS WITH THE MPLA IN ORDER TO HAVE FURTHER EXCUSES TO DELAY AND NEGOTIATE.

2. I TOOK TIME OUT TO CHECK MPLA ATTITUDES TOWARD ELECTIONS. MPLA NOW SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN DO WELL AT THE POLLS AND IS PUSHING FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF THE ELECTORAL LAW. THE LAW WAS READY ON JULY 10 AND HAS BEEN SIGNED BY BOTH MPLA AND UNITA. ONCE FNLA SIGNS IT WILL BE PROMULGATED. LONG AND COMPLEX, THE LAW CONSISTS OF OVER 190 ARTICLES AND PROVIDES FOR THE ELECTION

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00964 241550Z

OF 120 MEMBERS TO A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. MPLA OFFICIALS WITH

WHOM I HAVE TALKED ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE RECEPTION THEY HAVE HAD IN THEIR TRAVELS EAST AND SOUTH AND SEEM GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PROCEEDING WITH ELECTIONS. AGOSTINHO NETO TOLD ME A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO THAT MPLA HAS STRONG SUPPORT IN THE AREA BETWEEN LOBITO AND NOVA LISBOA, GENERALLY CONSIDERED A UNITA PRESERVE. RESIDENTS OF THE AREA HAVE CONFIRMED TO ME THAT MPLA IS ACTIVE IN THAT REGION AND HAS BEEN PASSING OUT GUNS AS PART OF ITS ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES. TO THE EAST OF NOVA LISBOA, HOWEVER, UNITA IS STILL THE PREMIER ORGANIZATION AND A MISSIONARY HAS TOLD ME THAT WHEN MPLA ACTIVISTS SHOW UP NOW THEY ARE RUN OFF.

3. ON JULY 19, THE BRITISH MANAGER OF A LOCAL COMPANY, KEITH MANNING, REALIZED THAT LIKE MOST OF US HE WAS LEAVING THE COUNTRY AND HAD NO PICTURES TO SHOW RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. HE TRAVELLED AROUND THE TOWN SNAPPING SCENES AND SUDDENLY, AS HE TELLS IT, FOUND HIMSELF IN FRONT OF A CROWD COMPOSED MAINLY OF WHITES. HE STEPPED FROM HIS CAR, TOOK A FEW PICTURES AND IMMEDIATELY WAS ACCOSTED BY MPLA SOLDIERS WHO DEMANDED TO KNOW WHO HE WAS AND WHY HE WAS TAKING PICTURES. HE WAS, IN FACT, IN FRONT OF THE MPLA HEADQUARTERS IN VILA ALICE. MANNING PRODUCED THE ONLY IDENTIFICATION HE HAD, A PILOT'S LICENSE WHICH SHOWED HIM TO BE AN EMPLOYEE OF "PRICE, WATERHOUSE ALA CIA." WHEN HIS INTERROGATORS SAW THAT HE WAS AN AGENT OF THE CIA THEY TOOK HIM INTO CUSTODY AND SENT HIM TO THE BULL RING, THE SAME BULL RING FROM WHICH, AS I REPORTED A FEW MONTHS AGO, MPLA TROOPS NEWLY ARRIVED FROM CABINDA HAD FIRED UPON A SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS JET. AS SOON AS THE BRITISH CONSULATE LEARNED HE WAS MISSING THEY MADE INQUIRIES AND EVENTUALLY GOT IN TOUCH WITH LUCIO LARA, THE MPLA SECOND IN COMMAND. MANNING WAS RELEASED ON JULY 23. HE EVIDENCED NO DISPLEASURE OVER HIS TREATMENT WHILE IN CAPTIVITY AND, IN FACT, SAID THAT THE REGIMEN OF RICE FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER HAD SLIMMED AND TOUGHENED HIM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I SUSPECT, HE HAS A STORY TO TELL FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, IF HE HUSBANDS IT.

4. THE JORNAL DE ANGOLA BOMBING I REPORTED THE OTHER DAY MAY HAVE BEEN AN INSIDE JOB. I LEARNED THE BOMB WAS ON THE SECOND FLOOR, IN AN INNER CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE PRESS ROOM

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUANDA 00964 241550Z

AND THE NEWSROOM AND APPEARED IN THE CORRIDOR AT 2110, AFTER THE DOORS DOWNSTAIRS SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOCKED. THE BOMB CONSISTED, ACCORDING TO MY SOURCE, OF AN ATTACHE CASE LYING ON THE FLOOR, WITH A SACHEL SITTING ON TOP OF IT. AN EMPLOYEE IN THE PRESS ROOM SAW THE BOMB BEGIN TO SMOKE AND SPARK AND THE BUILDING WAS CLEARED IMMEDIATELY, ALTHOUGH THE BOMB WENT OFF BEFORE EVERYONE COULD GET OUT. AS WITH EVERY OCCURRENCE IN ANGOLA, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THEORIES. FIRST, THE MPLA DID IT;

THEY TELEGRAPHED THEIR INTENTION TO DO SO SEVERAL DAYS AGO.
SECOND, THE FNLA DID IT BECAUSE THE PAIEG'S EMPLOYEES WERE GETTING
UPPITY AND WANTED TO ADOPT A NEUTRAL EDITORIAL STANCE IN PLACE
OF THE SLAVISH DEVOTION TO FNLA. THIRD, THE EMPLOYEES DID IT
BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO TEACH FNLA AND THE PUBLISHER, RUY CORREIA
DE FREITAS, A LESSON. JORNAL DE ANGOLA WAS BACK ON HE
NEWSTANDS JULY 24 WITH A NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD
THAT IT WOULD MANAGE THE PAPER UNTIL A NEW DIRECTOR
COULD BE NAMED TO REPLACE RUY CORREIA DE FREITAS.
KILLORAN

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